



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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INTERIOR TO PERMIT COMMERCIAL RED SALMON FISHERY IN BRISTOL BAY

Secretary of the Interior Fred Seaton announced today a change in the Department's Alaska fishery regulations to permit a limited commercial fishery for red salmon in Bristol Bay, Alaska, this year.

The regulations previously published had closed Bristol Bay to commercial fishing for red salmon in order to insure necessary escapement of spawning fish. In announcing the regulations on April 24, the Secretary said further changes might be forthcoming in light of subsequent developments.

Mr. Seaton said that he had authorized the change in the regulations after a thorough review of the situation in the light of recent developments, including discussions with the Japanese regarding the high seas salmon fishery.

The new regulation will permit limited commercial fishing for red salmon in each of the major districts of Bristol Bay. Both drift nets and set nets will be permitted to operate for weekly fishing periods determined on the basis of the amount of fishing gear registered for fishing.

The regulation provides for a fishery of a type similar to recent years, but on a much more restricted basis. The so-called "gear-time table" will be utilized to regulate the fishery. However, shorter weekly fishing periods will be allowed at a given level of fishing effort than in previous years. No change is made in the regulations previously promulgated for species other than red salmon.

The Secretary has been informed by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries that the high seas fishery in the North Pacific will be less intense generally than last year. He has also been informed that the total quota of the Japanese fishery has been reduced this year and that with respect to red salmon--the species of particular concern in Bristol Bay--the Japanese quota throughout the area of the North Pacific in which Japanese fishermen operate has been reduced from 11 million fish last year to 8 million fish this year.

In the areas frequented by North American red salmon stocks, it is expected that catches will not be sufficiently great to preclude a limited commercial fishery in Bristol Bay on these same stocks in the course of their migration to the spawning grounds. Secretary Seaton emphasized, however, that developments during the fishing season for red salmon on the high seas and in Bristol Bay will be watched very closely, and that further changes in regulations may be necessary to assure the adequate seeding of the spawning grounds to preserve the resource.

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